

*Madam Chairwomen & Members of the Committee*

Hello, my name is Rachel Harp from Billings; I am with Concerned Women for America. I am here today to ask you to support HB377 to repeal Common Core, SBAC/assessments and to establish a better, more transparent system to develop Montana content standards.

The citizens of the state of Montana have been poorly represented in the adoption of the Common Core Standards. It was put into place under the radar of even this fine legislative body. Many citizens have risen up to protest this overreach of the federal government, and now is the time for our representatives to take action.

There are many concerns that need to be heeded regarding these standards and their assessment counterpart, one of the most pressing being the fiscal impact of the adoption. There is no exact price tag for the implementation but estimates are considerable. The standards were adopted in 2011 when our legislators were in the interim. A fiscal analysis was not done until 2012. In this analysis, it mentions that if the Board of Public Education adopts an addendum to accreditation standards that action causes a substantial fiscal impact. The board may not implement the standard until July 1 following the next regular legislative session and shall request that the same legislature fund implementation of the proposed standard. Many tied SB175, passed in 2013, to the funding of Common Core. SB175 Student Achievement Bill's Facebook page stated that this bill does not even bring schools back to full inflation and that there will be no additional sources for schools to address Common Core.

This bill gave Billings Public Schools, for example, an increase in budget of 1.2% to deal with rising inflationary costs, according to chief financial officer for Billings Public Schools. If this bill is not even catching our school budgets up with inflation, how will it aid in the implementation of a drastic change of accreditation standards and their assessment? Here are just a few areas that will need to be funded to facilitate this change.

**Substitute Teachers** — Schools have to send teachers to be a part of the curriculum mapping process for Common Core Standards. These trainings will be over multiple days which will take teachers out of the classroom. There is a cost to have a substitute teacher in the classroom for multiple days.

**New Textbooks** — Textbooks are outrageously expensive; even if we do find internet options, the publishers who created those options are certainly not offering them for free.

**The Cost of Time** — Teachers spend a great deal of time trying to educate themselves on the changes from their old standards to those of the Common Core. The cost of time is a big reality for schools.

**Training Teachers** — Bringing in outside experts or consultants is very expensive. In order to properly train teachers, school districts must offer professional development in order to ensure that educators can master the Common Core Standards. These trainings are not a one-shot deal and will cost school districts money.

As part of the fiscal analysis done in 2012, many schools were surveyed. Many of them expressed concerns on how they were going to pay for these new standards.

School districts adopted Common Core before the fiscal analysis was completed. This is unconstitutional. Now we are stuck implementing national standards that we have no idea what the final cost will be. What is a significant impact? 7.5 million? 35 million? Isn't there a responsibility to the taxpayers of Montana to know how much something is going cost?

Concerned Women for America of Montana is deeply concerned about the impact these unknowns are going to play in keeping Montana's educational environment effective and increase opportunities for children to succeed.